

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 698
By Haun

A RESOLUTION to honor noted Tennessee artist Sammy Nicely
of Russellville, Kentucky.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly is proud that our state is the home of
some of the most gifted and accomplished artists in the country; and

WHEREAS, Sammy Nicely of Russellville, Kentucky is one such highly regarded artist,
who has had his inspirational work featured in the prestigious Africa to Appalachia celebration;
and

WHEREAS, Sammie Nicely is the son of Mattie and James Nicely, who was a "jack of all
trades" and made and fixed things; and

WHEREAS, Sammie is a graduate of Whitesburg High School, attended Morristown
College and received a Bachelor of Science in Art Education from Middle Tennessee State
University in 1975; and

WHEREAS, he has also studied at the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in
Gatlinburg and has worked and taught art in such locales as Jamaica, the Cayman Islands,
Charleston, and Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, with the encouragement of several professors and friends, Sammie started
to connect and empathize with African art traditions while a student at Middle Tennessee State
University; and

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WHEREAS, for approximately twenty years, he maintained a studio in Russellville, a few blocks from where he grew up. The studio provided workspace, a kiln, exhibition space, and storage room; and

WHEREAS, in 1987, Sammie and his wife, Jovita Wells, formed the From Africa to Appalachia Foundation, an exemplary organization that is dedicated to sharing the cultural, creative and artistic spirit of African Americans for whom Appalachia is home for the people of East Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, he was one of a select group of artists who were chosen to participate in the re-designing of the international departure area at Atlanta's Hartsfield airport; and

WHEREAS, another of his recent projects was the organization of a major exhibition of the works of Bessie Harvey, a self-taught artist who lived in Alcoa and was an important influence on his work; and

WHEREAS, Sammie is in constant demand as a guest lecturer and has worked closely with the Columbia, Tennessee school system for the last five years; and

WHEREAS, his endeavors in education have been very successful; school administrators have recognized his meritorious efforts as having a positive influence on numerous students who do not perform well in traditional academic areas; and

WHEREAS, this past year, he participated in a Columbia instructional television network; and

WHEREAS, he hopes that his work will help "bring art to the people", thus enabling him to share his talents with the community at large, and the African American community in particular; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we pause to recognize and honor this eminent artist; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we recognize and honor Sammie Nicely for sharing the vision and beautiful imagery of his art with his fellow Tennesseans and wish him much continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation, with this final clause omitted from such copies.